

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YU, AU

SUBJECT: SLOVENE MINORITY ISSUE: AUSTRO-YUGOSLAV PRESS WAR MOUNTS

REFS: A) VIENNA 6617, B) VIENNA 6877

1. "PRESS WAR" BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND AUSTRIA OVER GOA
PLAN TO HOLD LANGUAGE CENSUS THIS NOVEMBER AND TO COMPLETE
IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE TREATY OF 1955 AS IT PERTAINS TO
PROTECTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS HAS CONTINUED TO MOUNT IN WAKE
OF ST. KANZIAN INCIDENT REPORTED REFTELS.

2. AUSTRIAN MEDIA RECENTLY REPORTED ATTACKS IN "POLITIKA"
TO EFFECT THAT AUSTRIAN APPROACH TO SLOVENIAN MINORITY PROBLEM
HAD FANNED INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND, IN PLANNED
MINORITY CENSUS, CONTEMPLATED ACTION "TANTAMOUNT TO
REVISION OF STATE TREATY." AUGUST 22-23 AUSTRIAN MEDIA
REPORTED FURTHER "POLITIKA" ARTICLE THAT LIKENED
TREATMENT OF SLOVENIAN CARINTHIANS IN AUSTRIA TO THAT
OF BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA. ACCORDING TO AUSTRIAN
PRESS, "POLITIKA" JUXTAPOSED PICTURES OF CAPE TOWN
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INCIDENTS WITH PICTURES OF INCIDENTS AT ST. KANZIAN.

COMPARISON OF AUSTRIA TO SOUTH AFRICA ELICITED STRONG REJOINDER FROM CHANCELLOR KREISKY WHO CALLED "PLITIKA" ARTICLE "UNHEARD-OF INDECENCY." INTERVIEWED BY TELEPHONE WHILE ON VACATION IN VENICE, KREISKY CONTINUED THAT, ALTHOUGH AUSTRIA WOULD NOT PROTEST TO YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT, MATTER WARRANTED CLOSE ATTENTION INASMUCH AS THERE WAS NO FREEDOM OF PRESS IN YUGOSLAVIA AND YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES WERE THUS MORE OR LESS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESS ATTACKS.

3. KREISKY'S VIEW WAS ECHOED FOLLOWING DAY BY LEADER OF OPPOSITION AUSTRIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY LABOR LEAGUE, ALOIS MOCK, WHO FIRMLY REJECTED YUGOSLAV PRESS ATTACKS, WHICH HE ALSO DESCRIBED AS GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED AND AS ADDING FUEL TO FIRE IN CARINTHIA.

4. COMMENT: FROM VIENNA PERSPECTIVE, INCREASINGLY SHRILL STATEMENTS IN YUGOSLAV MEDIA, PARTICULARLY PERSONAL CRITICISM OF KREISKY, ARE HAVING EFFECT IN AUSTRIA OF SOLIDIFYING OPINION BEHIND CHANCELLOR AND SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO RESOLVE MINORITIES PROBLEM ALONG LINES DESCRIBED VIENNA 5712. PRESS WAR, IF CONTINUED, COULD ALSO ENCOURAGE CARINTHIAN EXTREMISTS OF BOTH STRIPES AND FURTHER COMPLICATE ALREADY DIFFICULT SITUATION. MEEHAN

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